no microphones, of course, and each speaker had to rely on his vocal cords. But I could reach the rear ranks of crowds of ten or even twenty thousand and did not complain of the acoustics. Best of all, I liked the meetings in workshops: long rows of lathes, a cobweb of transmission belts in the air, piles of iron sheets all around.

In some factories, meetings were held in the local church, amid icons, gilded crosses, banners with religious emblems, candles and hanging lamps that flickered along the walls. The speaker addressed the crowd from the elevation in front of the altar designed for the priest. The audience stood motionless, as if in prayer, catching every word. Many women workers considered the meeting in the church as a kind of public prayer, the only difference being that people were praying not for the Tsar, but against him. After one such meeting, a number of women workers surrounded me, and an old woman, in tears, assured me that I had performed the service as well as Father Alexander.

THE BOLSHEVIKS ATTACK THE SOVIET

The rise of the Soviet had come as rather an unpleasant surprise to the Bolsheviks in St. Petersburg. They were accustomed to think of two principal types of labor organization—political parties and trade unions. The latter were supposed to take care of the economic interests of workers while the party assumed political leadership. The Bolsheviks believed that they alone, in the long run, were entitled to represent labor in the political arena, but that now—because of infiltration of intellectuals and peasants into the labor movement—they were compelled temporarily to share this role with other groups, such as the Mensheviks and the S-R. Yet what right had the Soviet to speak in the name of St. Petersburg workers? Perhaps it could have a say in economic matters as a loose big union, but it was not qualified to make political decisions, issue political declarations, and, least of all, act as the mouthpiece of the revolution!

Furthermore, the Bolsheviks could not forget that the Soviet had been founded by the Mensheviks, who had succeeded in packing its Executive Board with their people. However, in the last days of the strike, our High Command reversed its policy. It recognized the Soviet, sent its official representatives to its Executive Board, and instructed its cells in the factories to campaign for the election of "reliable" candidates to the Soviet. At the same time, our group of meeting speakers was invited to attend the sessions of the Soviet and support its activities. We virtually became a part of the Soviet. Very